
Uniform System of Grading, Rule

The Background:

TCA 49-1-302(a)(18) authorizes the state board to promulgate rules and regulations for the administration of policy establishing a uniform system of grading. In 2004, the Board was authorized to establish a task force to make recommendations including, but not limited to, the following:

- A. Consistent numerical breaks for letter grades.
- B. Considerations of standards to define an honors course.
- C. Appropriate weighting of courses.
- D. Determination of courses and weights to be used to calculate class rank.

TCA 49-6-407 states that each LEA shall adopt and use the uniform grading system developed by the Board for students enrolled in grades nine through twelve (9-12). The code also establishes that the uniform system of grading shall be used to report grades for the purposes of postsecondary financial assistance administered by the Tennessee Student Assistance Corporation.

Upon approval, this rule will become effective for the 2006-07 academic year.

The Recommendation:

SBE staff recommends adoption of the proposed rule on final reading.

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Subparagraph (b) of paragraph (3) of Rule 0520-1-3-.05 State Curriculum, Requirement D is amended by deleting the part in its entirety and substituting instead the following so that as amended the subparagraph shall read:

- (b) Local school systems shall develop and implement grading, promotion, and retention policies for grades K-8. The policies shall be communicated annually to students and parents.

Paragraph (3) of Rule 0520-1-3-.05 State Curriculum, Requirement D is further amended by adding new subparagraphs (c), (d) and (e) so that as amended the subparagraph shall read:

- (c) Local school systems shall use the following uniform grading system for students enrolled in grades nine through twelve (9-12). Students' grades shall be reported for the purposes of application for postsecondary financial assistance administered by the Tennessee Student Assistance Corporation using the uniform grading system.

Uniform Grading System				
Grade	Percentage Range		Weighting for Honors Courses and National Industry Certification	Weighting for Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate Courses
A	93	100	May include the addition of 3 percentage points to the grades used to calculate the semester average.	May include the addition of 5 percentage points to the grades used to calculate the semester average.
B	85	92		
C	75	84		
D	70	74		
F	0	69		

Assigning additional quality points above 4.0 for honors courses, AP, IB, and National Industry Certification courses is not allowed for the purpose of determining eligibility for the lottery scholarships.

All course types, as defined below, shall be used for reporting student grades for the determination of eligibility for HOPE scholarships.

- (d) State approved courses. State approved courses shall meet all appropriate content standards, learning expectations, and performance indicators as approved by the State Board of Education and are eligible for the points listed above.
- (e) Honors Courses and National Industry Certification courses. Local education agencies may elect to offer honors courses and National

Industry Certification (NIC) courses. Local educational agencies electing to offer honors courses will ensure that the approved honors courses substantially exceed the content standards, learning expectations, and performance indicators as approved by the State Board of Education. Further, each local education agency offering honors courses will ensure that additional rigor is being provided by implementing the framework of standards for honors courses listed below:

1. Framework of Standards for Honors Courses

Honors courses will substantially exceed the content standards, learning expectations, and performance indicators approved by the State Board of Education. Teachers of honors courses will model instructional approaches that facilitate maximum interchange of ideas among students: independent study, self-directed research and learning, and appropriate use of technology. All honors courses must include multiple assessments exemplifying coursework (such as short answer, constructed-response prompts, performance-based tasks, open-ended questions, essays, original or creative interpretations, authentic products, portfolios, and analytical writing). Additionally, an honors course shall include a minimum of five of the following components:

- (i) Extended reading assignments that connect with the specified curriculum.
- (ii) Research-based writing assignments that address and extend the course curriculum.
- (iii) Projects that apply course curriculum to relevant or real-world situations. These may include oral presentations, power point, or other modes of sharing findings. Connection of the project to the community is encouraged.
- (iv) Open-ended investigations in which the student selects the questions and designs the research.
- (v) Writing assignments that demonstrate a variety of modes, purposes, and styles.
 - (I) Examples of mode include narrative, descriptive, persuasive, expository, and expressive.
 - (II) Examples of purpose include to inform, entertain, and persuade.
 - (III) Examples of style include formal, informal, literary, analytical, and technical.
- (vi) Integration of appropriate technology into the course of study.

- (vii) Deeper exploration of the culture, values, and history of the discipline.
- (viii) Extensive opportunities for problem solving experiences through imagination, critical analysis, and application.
- (ix) Job shadowing experiences with presentations which connect class study to the world of work.

All course types which meet the above framework will be classified as honors, eligible for additional percentage point weighting.

Technical courses that offer a National Industry Certification through a nationally recognized examination may be weighted by adding 3 points to all grades used to calculate the semester average.

If honors courses and courses that offer National Industry Certification are offered, the local education agency shall annually approve the list of such courses. This list of National Industry Certification courses and of approved honors courses with a complete syllabus for each course shall be approved by the local education agency and made readily available to the public.

Each local education agency shall adopt policies for honors courses and technical courses that offer national industry certification that may allow for the addition of 3 points to all grades used to calculate the semester average.

2. Advanced Placement Courses and International Baccalaureate Courses. Local education agencies may elect to offer Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate courses. If Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate courses are offered, the local education agency shall annually approve a list of such courses. This list of approved courses shall be made readily available to the public. Local education agencies will ensure that approved courses substantially incorporate the learning objectives and course descriptions as defined by the College Board or International Baccalaureate Agency.

Each local education agency shall adopt policies for the approved Advanced Placement courses and International Baccalaureate courses that have end-of-course national examinations that may allow for the addition of 5 points to all grades used to calculate semester averages. Only Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate courses that have end-of-course national examinations qualify for the addition of 5 points.